



Show: [Spring Awakening](#)

Society: [Between the Bars](#)

Venue: [Robinson Theatre, Hills Road, Cambridge](#)

Credits: [Music by Duncan Sheik](#) [Book & Lyrics by Steven Sater](#), based on the play by [Frank Wedekind](#)

Type: [Sardines](#)

Performance Date: [23/10/2019](#)

Spring Awakening

[Admin](#) | 25 Oct 2019 08:02am



Spring Awakening is an unusual mix. With its roots in a Nineteenth Century German play, writing team Steven Sater and Duncan Sheik have reworked it to incorporate a modern musical theatre score. This production takes this further, employing contemporary choreography, including frequent use of prop microphones, whilst performing in period dress. Exploring the timeless themes of teenage loves, losses and battles with authority in frequently edgy and challenging ways, this outwardly eclectic mix gels together into a well-rounded piece, handled with skill and dexterity by [Between the Bars Theatre](#).

Hector Wheatley is immediately likeable as the big-hearted Melchoir. Always looking out for his school friends, and later in a developing relationship, he brings an impressive emotional range to the part. Catriona Clarke's Wendla, the focus of that relationship presents just the right balance of sweetness and the curiosity of growing maturity.

Michael Bloom, as Melchoir's classmate and friend Moritz brings a convincing blend of nervous energy, angst and anger to his troubled character, particularly as he confronts his perceived failures in life. His struggles are keenly felt in an emotional exchange with Ilse, played with great tenderness by Marie Buda.

James Hayward and Stephanie Swan between them cover every adult role in the piece including schoolteachers, various parents, a doctor and a priest. Both rise to the challenge of bringing each and every one to life, finding different mannerisms and characterisations and frequently involving lightening-pace costume changes and entrances.

A mixed ensemble completes the company. Each member, with an individual character name, has a stand out moment: particularly poignant is Martha, played by Chloe Kitteridge revealing her suffering at the hands of an abusive father, whilst Alex Kubiesa and Matthew Hall as Hanshen and Ernst have a lovely delicate moment as they reveal their feelings for each other.

At other times the ensemble blends into a Greek Chorus delivering beautiful harmonies, a great credit to Co-Musical Directors Joe Griffiths and Sam Kirby.

Slickly directed by Cat Nicol using only a bare minimum of props, with well-drilled choreography by Laurie Lee McDowell and Rosie Parrish, set against beautiful sepia projections by Ian Bruno and atmospheric lighting by John Moore and Martha Gregg, this is a fascinating little gem of a piece: I hope it gets the attention it deserves.